Article on Joel Sweeny Printed In Current Issue of Magazine

An interesting article on Appomattox's Joel Walker Sweeney, and the history of the 5-string banjo which Sweeney invented, appears in the current issue of The Fretted Instrument News, a bi-monthly magazine published in Providence, R. I. The article is by Col. George H. Collins, civil engineer and retired Army officer, who is recognized as one of the top authorities on banjo lore. Col. Collins has visited in Appomattox and has devoted considerable time and research to the writing of a book on the life of Sweeney. His research on this subject has taken him into many parts of the country, and he has gathered a fine file on the matter. He is an experimentater in the physics of music. As an engineer, he was responsible for the design and construction of the new steel bridges on the Alaska R. R., 1936-40, and was in charge of construction of Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and the Denver Ordnance Plant for the Army in 1941. He commanded an Engineer Company in World War I, and a combat regiment in World War II.

It is understood that his book on Appomattox's famous minstrel is almost ready for the printers.

The article mentioned above has a number of excellent illustrations. These include a picture of Joel Sweeney, his brothers, Sam and Dick Sweeney, and of Joel Sweeney's original banjo.

The actual invention of Sweeney is described in great detail by Col. Collins. He places the date of the Sweeney invention as 1831, at which time Joel Walker Sweeney was 21. Beginning with the ancient three or four string "banjer" or "gourd", he reached the conclusion that both its tone and construction could be vastly improved. Sweeney's mastery of the violin was an asset to him in the stages leading to the modern banjo. He substituted a perfectly round rim for the gourd shell by using a half cheese box or half a peck measure. To this he attacked a skin head. He tried the hides of many smaller animals: skunk, wildcat, calf, goat, sheep and some even say the cat. The banjo neck was carefully and skillfully carved from solid wood. He selected hairs from the horse's tail for the string in his experiments. He decided that a string of high pitch on one side with a low one on the other side caused an imbalance, and to overcome this and to take the place of the violin struts, he devised a short or fifth string for the bass side with the same tension but higher pitch than the string on the opposite side. The head was tightened by the heat from an open fire. He perfected a system of bracket hook screws, and with one Boucher, of Baltimore, it is said, used it on all his later banjos.

Joel Sweeney acquired the title of "King of Banjoists" and entertained far and wide. It is claimed that he organized the first blackface acts on the New York stage, traveled with his minstrel troupe.

Sweeney was also a composer and the songs he wrote were favorites on the New York stage starting in 1839.

In the magazine article being discussed, Col. Collins traces the history of the banjo down to modern times, and the current banjo veteran Fred Van Epps. Van Epps is being featured currently in a series of interesting articles in Hobbies Magazine.

Certainly, the people of Appomattox will await the publication of Col. Collins' book on Sweeney. It should be a valuable addition to the field of Virginia research.

On his last stay in Appomattox, Col. Collins arranged for a temporary marker to be placed at the grave of Joel Walker Sweeney. He hopes to see a monument installed at the spot: just north of Appomattox River and within sight of Route 24, and a scant few hundred yards from the historic McLean House at Old Appomattox Court House.

A man was on his way to visit some friends during summer vacation. The way led to a swamp.

"Say," he asked, "is it true that an alligator won't hurt you if you carry a torch?"

The guide thought a moment. "It depends on how fast you carry it, I reckon."

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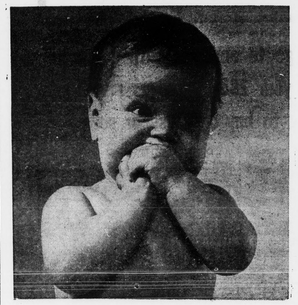

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APPOMATTOX VIRGINIA

Sarah Anne's COOKING CLASS

Cherries have long been a welcome fruit, both fresh and canned. Everyone likes a cherry pie, with its flaky crust and juicy filling. For variety, try some of the following recipes of red, white and bing cherries:

Cherry Pie

1 cup cherry juice
1 cup sugar
3 tablespoons quick cooking tapioca
Salt to taste
3 cups drained pitted cherries canned or frozen
Few drops red food coloring
1 tablespoon butter
Pastry

Line a 9-inch pie-plate with your favorite pastry. Combine the cherry juice, sugar, tapioca, salt, cherries and food coloring. Let stand about 10 minutes. Fill pastry lined pie-plate with cherry mixture. Dot with butter. Make lattice top, flute the edge. Bake 45 minutes in an over 400 degrees.

Bing Cherry Pie

1 baked 9-inch pie shell
1 No. 2½ can Bing cherries, pitted
1 package cherry flavored gelatine
½ cup sherry wine
½ cup cream whipped
1-3 cup slivered toasted almonds
1 cup cream whipped

Drain cherries, save the juice. To the juice add enough water to make 1 3-4 cups liquid. Add gelatin, stir until dissolved. Add sherry. Refrigerate until thick and syrupy. Fold in cherries, ½ cup cream whipped(and almonds. Refrigerate until stiff enough to hold its shape. Turn into baked pie shell. Chill. When ready to serve garnsh with ½ cup cream whipped.

Cherry Salad

Large can black cherries, drained
1 tablespoon gelatin
1-4 cup cold cherry juice
2 cups hot cherry juice
½ lb. cream cheese
Pineapple juice
Salad greens.

Reserve juice from cherries. Pack cherries in a greased ring mold. Soften gelatin in hot cherry juice, adding water if needed to make 2 cups. Pour over cherries. Chill until firm. Beat cream cheese with enough pineapple juice to make it very light. Pile in center of ring. Garnish with salad greens.

Cherry Nut Bread

3 cups packaged biscuit mix
½ cup sugar
1 egg beaten
1 1-4 cups milk
1 cup chopped nuts
3-4 cup cut up candied cherries.

In a large mixing bowl, stir together, the sugar, egg, milk, nuts and cherries. Add the biscuit mix and beat briskly for 30 seconds. Put into a greased 10" x 5" x 3" pan and bake 45 to 50 minutes in an oven 350 degrees. The bread cuts better when it is a day old.

Cherry Drops

1 package cookie mix
1-4 cup maraschino cherry juice
1-4 cup cooking sherry
1-4 cup maraschina cherries drained and coarsely chopped
1-2 cups nuts coarsely chopped

Combine cookie mix, cherry juice and cooking sherry. Beat until smooth. Add nuts and cherries. Drop by teaspoonfuls an ungreased cooky sheet. Bake 12 to 14 minutes in an over 375 degrees.

Cherry Rolls

2 packages dry yeast
1-2 cup water
1 1-4 cups scalded milk
1-2 cup sugar
6 tabelspoons butter or margarine
2 teaspoons salt
2 eggs beaten
2 cups sifted flour
5 to 5 1-2 cups sifted flour
4 tablespoons butter
Cherry Preserves

Soften yeast in water. Combine milk, sugar, 6 tablespoons butter and salt. Add softened yeast. Add 5 to 5 1-2 cups flour to make a soft dough. Turn out on a floured board, knead until smooth. Place in a greased bowl. Cover, and let rise until double in bulk. Punch down. Roll 1-2 inch thick on floured board. Spread with 2 tablespoons of softened butter. Fold in half. Pinch edges of dough together. Roll 1-2-inch thick and spread with 2 tablespoons of butter. Fold in half. Pinch edge together. Roll 1-2-inch thick. But in 2 inch circle, place on a greased cooky sheet. Cover and let rise until double in bulk. Make a hole in the center of each roll and fill with cherry preserves. Bake for 10 to 20 minutes in an oven 400 degrees.

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C. R. Dickerson & H. W. Nash, Pamplin	520	256.91	20.50	to 60	@ 49.41
W. W. Metcalf, Cullen	608	317.06	31	to 63	@ 48.76
E. L. & W. T. Hamlet, Charlotte C. H.	222	107.20	29	to 70	@ 48.20
C. T. Dickerson & Clarke, Charlotte C. H.	536	256.88	32	to 60	@ 47.93
Gordon Harvey & W. T. Gallier, Pamplin	282	135.15	24.50	to 58	@ 47.93
L. D. Fleshman, Pamplin	160	76.44	35	to 67	@ 47.78
C. T. Crews, Cullen	502	239.74	22.50	to 63	@ 47.77
A. P. Womack, Cullen	226	107.71	20.50	to 63	@ 47.66
W. B. Walker & Son, Cumberland	632	295.04	30	to 70	@ 46.68
H. A. Nickols, Charlotte C. H.	360	155.96	28	to 60	@ 43.32
Mrs. Fannie Hurt & Sam Jones, Appomattox	308	132.56	24.50	to 62	@ 43.04
C. C. & W. D. Harvey, Appomattox	702	301.72	26	to 65	@ 42.98
Charlie Johnson, Cumberland	466	199.31	22.50	to 59	@ 42.7[illegible]
W. J. Atkins & Son, Charlotte C. H.	1050	442.18	22.50	to 61	@ 42.11
Edward Spencer, Charlotte C. H.	492	206.98	29	to 56	@ 42.07
Marguerite Gilliam & W. H. Brown, Appomattox	532	222.48	28	to 56	@ 41.82
Mrs. Julia Roach & Russell Harvey, Cullen	688	285.52	28	to 60	@ 41.50
J. L. Blackwell, Appomattox	594	245.16	20.50	to 70	@ 41.27
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International Uniform Sunday School Lessons

BY DR. KENNETH J. FOREMAN

Background Scripture: Luke 14.
Devotional Reading: Matthew 10:24-

Christian Marks

Lesson for January 22, 1956

HOW can we tell whether a person is a Christian or not? Is there anything that marks all Christians? There is faith, of course; but only God can see faith itself. Jesus said: "By their fruits ye shall know them." What kind of "fruits" should we look for, in others and in ourselves, to see whether we are Christians? Only God is the final Judge. We should not be too quick to say brashly, "I know . . ." Better say, "I have good reason to believe . . ." So, what are the good reasons for believing that a person is a Christian? Sticking to our one chapter in Luke for this week, we can take note of three marks of a Christian, that is, of Jesus' followers, those who take his word as in order. They sound quite simple and ordinary; what is extraordinary, what is specially Christian about them, is the thoroughgoing quality Jesus expects.

Dr. Foreman

Helpfulness

Three marks which we can readily see suggested, in this chapter of sayings of our Lord, are: Helpfulness, humility, and honesty. Everyday qualities, aren't they? In fact, you can't get along without them in the civilized world. Nobody likes a man who brags all the time. Nobody likes a man who never lends a hand to anybody in trouble. Nobody likes a man who can't be trusted. Helpfulness, humility and honesty are not in themselves specially Christian attitudes. Jesus certainly did not invent these qualities. They are found among people of many religions and of no religion. What Jesus did was to demand an extraordinary high degree of these everyday virtues. First, as to helpfulness: Not only in the words quoted in Luke 14 but in many other ways and places, Jesus emphasizes how far his friends are expected to go. Most people are willing to help others, if it isn't bothersome or expensive. Jesus' idea of helpfulness was of something quite costly, something that calls for effort, self-sacrifice. Helpfulness as he sees it is not just doing something for somebody who will do as much for you. It means doing for people who never can pay you back. You can't be sure you are helpful as Christ was unless you are willing, as he was, to put out more for others than you are going to get back.

Humility

We all expect humility from other people, and we even practice it ourselves, in the form of courtesy. For courtesy is a form of humility,—"After you!" "Please," "Thank you," "Pardon me," and the like, are humble expressions, when you come to think of it. But Jesus expects His disciples to be humble and not just to talk humble. Are you a Christian at this point? A few questions are in order, to ask yourself. Am I always thinking that other people don't appreciate me? Am I a little sore because I don't get the promotions I deserve? When I say, "What's he got that I haven't got?" Do I feel a little peevish, as if the answer I expect is "Nothing"? Have I often been able to forget my own interests on behalf of others? One of the most striking stories about Jesus is told by John, who records that Jesus, "knowing he came from God and was going to God," took a towel and did the "menial" service that every one of his disciples was too proud to do. The highest is the humblest.

Honesty

Everybody knows that honesty is a good policy. But one mark of a Christian is that he will be honest at two points where (strangely enough) most people are least honest: that is, with himself and with God. The parables about counting the cost are really about the importance of facing the facts, admitting to yourself where you come short. Human capacity for self-deception is astounding. Why a man takes himself for a sucker, in other words, is something hard to understand. But it is even more amazing that men will think they can "get by" with God. Those excuses made by the unwilling guests, in Jesus' parable,—did they feel their host? Excuses offered to God are worse than waste of time.

(Based on outlines copyrighted by the International Council of Religious Education; used by permission of the Committee of Christian Education of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A. Released by Community Press Service.)

Home Agent's Notes

By Mrs. B. G. Anderson

Home Demonstration Agent

(Note: We continue below a discussion on Party Refreshment ideas; supplied by the county home agent). Cookies:

March: St. Patrick's Day—Use white candles and greens on table or an arrangement of Irish potatoes and greens. Invitations:

"If your Irish heart has panted
For a wish till now ungranted,
Bring it—right with you,
And I'll make that wish come true.
Write it down, the magic spell,
Drop it in my wishing well;
Wish a big one when you do,
For it surely will come true."

Place—

Date—

The host might wear a green paper hat, a green tie and carry a clay pipe. The hostess might wear an Irish costume made up of a short green skirt; white blouse and green bodice. Serve lime ice and tiny cakes frosted in pale green.

April: If you are planning a party the following invitation might be written with a clean pen and milk on paper shaped like a dunce cap. On the back should be written with ink "Hold over the lamp to see the message:"

"To be a fool again
Is not much fun, I know,
But being fools together,
Is lots of fun, I know."

Time—; Place—

When you dress for the party put your clothes on backwards. For decorations use balloons, clowns and Fool's caps. On the front door place a sign saying "Wet Paint — Go to Back Door." On the back door which is locked place an April Fool sign. April Party Frozen Fruit Salad, China cottage cheese balls, coffee, and crackers. Make fruit salad by your favorite recipe or freeze fruit or fruit cocktail mixture in the can. Slice, serve on lettuce with California salad dressing.

California Salad Dressing

2 egg yolks
1-2 cup lemon juice
2 tbsp. sugar
2 cups whipped cream or powdered milk.

Beat egg yolks, add lemon juice and sugar and cook in double boiler until thick. Cool. Fold in 2 cups whipped cream or powdered milk just before serving. The cooked mixture may be kept a week in the refrigerator, but do not add whipped cream or milk until ready to serve.

May: Suggestions —Flowers in basket for table, May basket tarts, or cup cake for dessert.

July: Drum cake, plain cake decorated to represent drums for table or sup cakes with tiny American flags stuck in the center. Make this a celebration a picnic on the porch or in the yard.

October: Witch's Brew (cider), doughnuts, candy corn, popcorn balls with black witch hats for favors. Pumpkin Jack O'Lantern for center of table.

November: Thanksgiving — Decorate table with bright colored vegetables and fruits and green leaves. Red or yellow apples might mark each place. Plan and prepare as many foods as possible ahead of big day to allow time for church and friends.

Use every holiday as an opportunity to celebrate with family. You can always make the table decoration or the dessert emphasize the holiday.

Coffee: Served between 9:30 and 11:00 A. M. Steaming or iced coffee (have tea bags ready just in case), apple sauce nut bread, sandwiches, this may be baked in tiny muffin tins or paper cups—cinnamon rolls, hot blue berry muffins, pecan rolls, hot Sally Lunn bread.

Brunch: Served between 9:00 and 12:30. A fruit, a main dish, bread and jam or a sweet roll. Fruit cup (melon balls, berries, peaches), garnished with mint, creamed chipbeef, chicken or ham on waffles (made up ahead or frozen, ready to heat and serve), coffee.

Luncheon: Served between 12:00 and 2:00 P. M. Add vegetables and dessert to brunch menu. Vegetables —asparagus, string beans, broccoli.

For the June Bride—melon ball cup, creamed chicken on waffles, asparagus, lime ice, white cake baked in ring or heart shaped pan, frosted pale pink, and coffee. For luncheon or brunch, use place cards to add hostess with seating arrangements, and help guests find places quickly.

Tea: Usually served between 3:30 and 5:00 P. M. Food should be simple and attractive, portions small so as not to interfere with next meal. Suggestions for Christmas Tea: Cranberry punch (with floating ice star garnish), assorted sandwiches or tiny biscuits and green mints or nuts, fruit cake or cookies (not both).

Highway Death Toll Set At 876

Richmond, Va.- Col. C. W. Woodson, Jr., Superintendent of State Police and Chairman of the Governor's Highway Safety Committee, today tentatively placed Virginia's 1955 traffic toll at 876, to compare unfavorably with the 810 of 1954. However, he pointed out, if 1954 were excluded, 1955 was the lowest death year since 1949, and that pedestrian deaths fell from 161 to 150, hitting an all-time low for the second straight year.

Noting that State Police arrests for traffic offenses will exceed last year's record of 105,415 by about 30,000 when compilation is completed, Col. Woodson pointed to three factors which he felt undoubtedly had their effect on the toll. Traffic volumes rose about 2 per cent, some of the initial psychological impact of radar had understandably worn off, and Virginia was very unfortunate in her multiple-fatal crash experience. In this last category, 1955 saw 94 crashes killing one or more persons each for a grand total of 236 deaths. In 1954, 78 of these killed 192 people.

"We can do nothing about the 1955 dead now," he said, "but we can consider these needless deaths as a challenge for the future and resolve now that it will not happen again. Remember, traffic safety is not only an official responsibility but a matter that concerns every citizen deeply. Despite any mitigating circumstances, the record is nothing short of disgraceful."

In closing, Col. Woodson noted further that 385 people lost their lives in crashes involving only one vehicle which left the road to overturn or strike a fixed object or overturned in the roadway.

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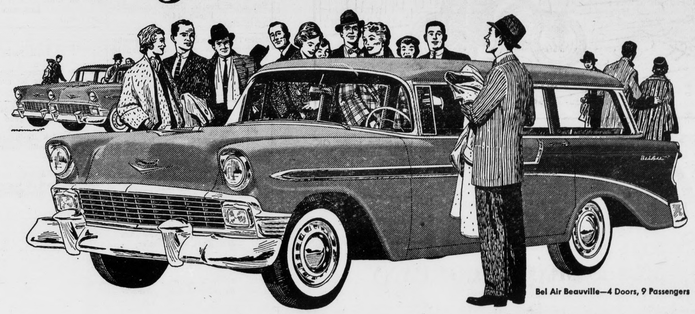

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